

RISKING THE GUARD: RISKING AMERICA

BY

COLONEL MICHAEL JOHNSON
United States Army National Guard

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U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

RISKING THE GUARD: RISKING AMERICA

by

Colonel Michael Johnson
United States Army National Guard

Colonel Mark Eshelman
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

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RISKING THE GUARD: RISKING AMERICA

The current pattern of using the reserves is endangering this valuable asset, and reforming laws and policies will be necessary to reverse the damage done and make the operational reserve sustainable.¹

—Commission on the National Guard and Reserves,
January 31, 2008

The use of the National Guard as an operational reserve is unsustainable, unrealistic and places our nation in unprecedented peril. The overnight, no-notice² transformation of this vital military resource from a strategic to operational reserve compromises the basic underpinnings of the Constitution's intent for a strong and independent militia. While several key defense leaders and academics opine that the current debate concerning the designation of reserve component transformation is "largely artificial and unproductive"³, this essay challenges that position by examining valid arguments and evidence to the contrary.

The continued underfunding and over utilization of the National Guard, specifically the Army National Guard, has stretched this valuable organization beyond our national leaders' willingness to adequately man, train and equip the already depleted force. The Guard's ability to maintain long-term operational competence as both a forward expeditionary force and homeland defense element is, arguably, an extremely challenging and most likely unreachable objective. Furthermore, with the implementation of the operational Guard and the elimination of the strategic reserve, defense policy makers have violated the doctrinally sound and historically tested use of reserve forces in the "grand strategy" of defending America.⁴ Moreover, the increasing reliance on the operationalized Guard as an active force replacement pool and the

persistent practice of internal cross-leveling of both personnel and equipment pushes this national asset to the breaking point. The exhaustive “federalization” of the Guard, made possible by emergent policies, laws and practices, increasingly impede state governors’ ability to provide rapid and effective response to statewide, regional and national catastrophic events.

This essay will begin by presenting the Department of Defense (DOD) directive that outlines the purpose, principles and policies that outline the utilization of the reserve components as an operational reserve. Secondly, based on the nine objectives of the DOD directive, this examination will measure the progress and prospect of strategic to operational transformation of the Army National Guard within current and projected fiscal constraints, expeditionary force requirements and homeland defense imperatives. Finally, this analysis will examine the ends, ways and means and address the feasibility, acceptability and suitability of an operational Guard in the context of 21st century national security requirements.

Department of Defense Directive 1200.17: The Army Guard as an Operational Force

Thomas F. Hall, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, addressing the Reserve Officers Association mid-winter 2004 conference, stated, that Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld is interested in transforming the Guard and Reserve "not tomorrow, but today." He further stated, "A window of opportunity to transform and change our Guard and Reserve forever" exists this year and next, and the Defense Department has several initiatives under way to rebalance Guard and Reserve forces.⁵

While this “rebalancing” effort adds additional responsibilities to the National Guard, it has not reduced expectations that the Guard will continue to provide a wide

range of capabilities that include warfighting, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and post-conflict and transitional operations such as democracy building and stability operations. Rebalancing efforts continue to drive National Guard strategic to operational transformation.

Guard transformation is codified, although well after its implementation, in Defense Directive 1200.17 which delineates the management of Reserve Components as operational forces.⁶ This directive lays out the purpose, principles and policies shaping the successful utilization of Reserve Components as an Operational Reserve. The directive was implemented in the fall of 2008, seven years past the attacks of 2001. Over 571,000 National Guard and Reservists mobilized in the Global War on Terrorism prior to the Defense Department's Operational Reserve directive.⁷

Nine key objectives are specified in the directive, they are:⁸

1. The Reserve Components provide operational capabilities and strategic depth to meet U.S. defense requirements across the full spectrum of conflict.
2. The Active Components and Reserve Components are integrated as a total force based on the attributes of the particular component and individual competencies.
3. The Reserve Components provide connection to and the commitment of the American public.
4. The continuum of service is utilized to enhance the effectiveness of and sustain the all-volunteer force with flexible service options that are attractive to a broad population.

5. Utilization rules are implemented to govern frequency and duration of activations. Since expectation management is critical to the success of the management of the Reserve Components as an operational force, these rules enhance predictability and judicious and prudent use of the Reserve Component.
6. Voluntary duty is encouraged to meet mission requirements.
7. The Reserve Components are resourced to meet readiness requirements. Resource Component resourcing plans shall ensure visibility to track resources from formulation, appropriation, and allocation through execution.
8. Outreach services are established and available for Reserve Component members, their families, and employers from pre-activation through reintegration.
9. Homeland defense and defense support to civil authorities are total force missions. Unity of effort is maintained consistent with statutory responsibilities in operations involving federal forces and non-federalized National Guard forces with federal forces under federal command and control and non-federalized National Guard forces under state command and control.

This DOD directive applies to all reserve components; however, this essay will focus specifically on the nine principles and policies as they relate to the National Guard and expressly the Army National Guard as an operational force. The Army Guard has felt the greater impact of strategic to operational transformation by way of contributing the largest number of reserve component personnel and equipment to overseas

missions and, consequently, reducing the assets available for homeland defense requirements.

The Army Guard Provides Operational Capabilities and Strategic Depth across the Full Spectrum of Conflict

The Army National Guard clearly meets the first objective of the operational directive by providing a significant combat and combat support presence across the full spectrum of conflict. Specifically, as a part of the Army's brigade-centric force, the Modular Force, the Army National Guard will by 2012 resource 28 brigade combat teams, 46 multifunctional brigades, 38 functional brigades and 17 tactical combat forces.⁹ Army leadership consistently recognizes the Army National Guard as an essential and integral component of the Army in the joint and interagency efforts to win the war, secure the homeland, and provide disaster relief at home and abroad.¹⁰

However, can the Army National Guard meet the requirements of the DOD directive while retaining strategic depth and remaining an operational force capable of conducting expeditionary and homeland responsibilities? An analysis of the Army Guard's expeditionary role and examination of its utility as a conventional reserve force challenge the validity of this operational directive.

As a component to our national defense strategy, the Army National Guard performs its role as a significant provider of expeditionary forces around the globe. Provided by law, the President of the United States exercises authority to federalize the National Guard, and by this authority may direct the Guard to conduct operations on foreign soil.

Today, in support of the Global War on Terrorism, the Army National Guard has mobilized more than 281,871 soldiers to active duty to support operational requirements

relating to the war on terrorism.¹¹ Of that number, over 240,000 Army Guard soldiers have deployed in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom since September 11, 2001.¹² In 2004, the National Guard along with other reserve component forces provided more than 33 percent of the all U.S. military forces in Operation Iraqi Freedom.¹³ This sizable forward commitment of the Army Guard at the beginning of major combat operations has appreciably altered the historically limited use of the Guard as an expeditionary force has challenged the long-established doctrinal use of the Guard as part of a military reserve.

“The concept of never fully committing one’s reserve is central to good military practice,” so states Dr. George Friedman CEO of Strategic Forecasting.¹⁴ Dr. Friedman writes,

The concept of the reserve force has a precise military meaning. At all levels of battle, commanders are enjoined to hold a force in reserve. Committing all forces to the battle, whether it is a squad-level engagement or a multi-division action, is understood to be extraordinarily dangerous. When the reserve is committed, the commander’s options contract. If he faces a sudden threat or opportunity, he has no resources with which to counter or exploit it.” The doctrine of “never fully committing one’s reserve is central to good military practice.”¹⁵

Clausewitz writes, “A reserve has two purposes. One is to prolong and renew the action; the second to counter unforeseen threats...the need to hold a force in readiness for emergencies may also arise in strategy”¹⁶ Deploying significant numbers of National Guard personnel in the onset and throughout, Operations’ Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom may meet active force personnel deficits; however, its use appears to violate the very tenants of successful war practice.

The Army National Guard may arguably meet the first operational directive by providing additional combat and combat related resources to current defense

requirements; however, by doing so it sacrifices its ability to provide, as the directive requires, strategic depth. In essence, the Army National Guard lacks the ability to do prolonged forward engagements while preserving indispensable strategic capability.

The Army Guard as Total Force asset.

The second objective of DOD Directive 1200.17 reinforces Total Force Integration in support of the management of the Army National Guard as an operational force. Indeed, the modern militia has truly evolved into a more sophisticated and much more relied upon instrument of national defense. Like all reserve components, the Army National Guard provides not only ready forces capable of performing full-spectrum operations, it also contributes soldiers possessing a wealth of civilian acquired skills valuable for missions at home and abroad. Moreover, the Army National Guard has historically been a cost-effective force that provides a daily connection between the military and the civilian community.¹⁷

Over time, Congress, the President and, with the implementation of DOD Directive 1200.17, the Defense Department have expanded the use of the National Guard. Beginning with the United States Constitution, the following provisions, acts and policies provide several examples of how the National Guard has, throughout the Nation's history, integrated into the total force and grown to be a more "federalized" entity.

Article I, Section 8, Clause 15 of the United States Constitution provides that Congress has three grounds for calling up the militia, "to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrection and repel invasions." Further, it clearly outlines the federal government's authority and intent to regulate and resource the National Guard. Article I,

Section 8 states, "Congress has the power to provide for organizing, arming and disciplining the militia and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States." This clause specifically reserves to the States the authority to establish a state-based militia. Overtime, America's militia, later renamed the National Guard, underwent several legislative acts to further define its role as the nation's primary reserve force.¹⁸ A closer analysis of several of these actions assists in understanding the National Guard's development over time.

Between 1903 and the 1920's, legislation was enacted that strengthened the Army National Guard as a component of the national defense force. The Dick Act of 1903 replaced the 1792 Militia Act and affirmed the National Guard as the Army's primary organized reserve. Also within that time period, The National Defense Act of 1916 expanded the Army National Guard's role and guaranteed the state militias' status as the Army's primary reserve force. This act provided the President authority, in case of war or national emergency, to mobilize the National Guard for the duration of the emergency. In 1933, The National Guard Mobilization Act made the National Guard a component of the Army at all times. This allowed the President to place the Guard into active federal service whenever Congress declared a national emergency. However, arguably, the most significant change to National Guard transformation occurred in 1973 with the implementation of the Total Force Policy.¹⁹

Following the experience of fighting an unpopular war in Vietnam, the 1973 Total Force Policy was designed to involve a large portion of the American public by mobilizing the National Guard from its thousands of locations throughout the United

States when needed. The Total Force Policy required that all active and reserve military organizations of the United States be treated as a single integrated force.²⁰

The Total Force Policy served as a prelude to the operationalized Army Guard. Consequently, as the National Guard became increasingly integrated into the total force, it becomes considerably easier for the President to commit the Guard into the forward fight. However, as previously stated, this amplified commitment jeopardizes the Guard's role as the national strategic reserve and America's primary homeland defense force.

The National Guard Provides Connection to and Ensures the Commitment of the American Public

The next two objectives of DOD Directive 1200.17 are interrelated and their analysis is combined to examine the essential principles of both the Guard's connectivity to the American public and the continuum of service necessary to sustain the commitment of the American people in support of this all-volunteer entity. The National Guard, more notably, the Army National Guard mutually benefits itself and other military services by its unique presence in over 3000 communities throughout America. The citizen-soldier provides the "connective tissue" between the military and the community.²¹ Moreover, a Guard member's seamless transition from citizen to soldier and from soldier to citizen provides for the continuum of service necessary to sustain community support of this vital reserve component.

The presence of the citizen-soldier is especially important in areas unfamiliar with large military populations. As Major General James Graves, United States Air Force Reserve, opines, "It is the Guard and Reserve on Main Street USA that connects the nation's struggles to the nation's citizens... having people in positions of prominence

within those communities is a resource for the nation that is incalculable.”²² The unprecedented use of the Guard in an expeditionary role may strain the time honored relationship between the Guardsmen and the local community. The heavy demands of an operational Guard distance citizen-soldiers and disassociate the military from the local community and create a vacuum of public consciousness.²³ The absence of the citizen-soldier from the public square, arguably, diminishes America’s support of its military. Compounding the ill-effects of this separation is the continued closure of an age-old icon of the National Guard – the Armory.

The armory is a genuine symbol of National Guard relevance. The traditional armories, emblematic of their historic service to National Guard members, families and the local community are disappearing from hundreds of towns across America. The Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) is slated to close 340 Army Reserve Centers and National Guard Armories throughout the nation. ²⁴ Author Phillip Carter writes,

These closures will change the relationship between the U.S. military and the society from which it's drawn. Many of these reserve centers, armories, and defense offices play an important role in their communities' lives—reserve armories frequently serve as local meeting halls and polling places, and reserve units often engage in community service projects, for example. When these bases go away, so too will the presence of the military in the lives of the people who reside and work near them. Initially, reservists may drive hours to drill with units at the new consolidated armory locations, but eventually these reservists will move nearer the big bases or quit the reserves. Either way, communities that today contribute reservists to the military will no longer do so.²⁵

In concurrence with BRAC closures, Lieutenant General Clyde Vaughn, the director of the Army National Guard, recently directed the closure of 150 armories. He cited that it was required in order to fill units to 91 percent under force transition requirements.²⁶ The loss of the “local armory” will require soldiers to travel away from

their hometown facilities, diminish the effectiveness of family and employer programs presented at those facilities and further distance National Guard homeland defense assets from the supported population. Moreover, this outcome will undoubtedly affect future efforts to recruit, retain and train an operationalized or strategic Army Guard force.

Essential to supporting a citizen based militia is the concept known as continuum of service. Continuum of services allows individuals to move seamlessly from active to reserve status and back to meet the changing needs of the service member and the services.”²⁷ In reality, moving “seamlessly” between a civilian occupation and a military career is a difficult task under the most favorable circumstances. Under current “operational” conditions, escalating military requirements, combined with growing civilian employment uncertainties, often force Army Guard members to choose between Guard careers and success in a civilian job.²⁸ As a consequence of these dual commitments, recent data (Fiscal Year 2008) reflects that 6,000 Captains and 3000 Majors have chosen to discontinue military service with the Army National Guard.²⁹

Moreover, under an operational Guard, the concept of citizens serving their state and nation on a part-time basis may be a relic of the past. Businessmen, farmers, students, teachers, doctors, clerks, craftsman, and other citizens, representing the rich diversity of the American workforce, “mustering” within their community to serve their fellow citizens reinforces the very foundation of the finest traditions and values that define the legacy of the citizen-soldier. Increased federal requirements and persistent state responsibilities strain traditional Guard roles. Professor and former Chief Historian of the Air Force, Richard Kohn, commenting before a Foreign Policy Forum in 2005,

stated, “the notion of the citizen-soldier is dead...the realities of America’s global commitments were no longer conducive to or appropriate for a citizen-army or citizen-soldier.”³⁰

Sustaining an all volunteer Army Guard under an operational footing may be the biggest challenge and most telling indicator of the future success of an operational force. Testing this effort will be the ever-increasing competition for National Guard recruits and the constant challenge to garner sufficient funding for Guard advertising and incentive programs. In particular, enlistment bonuses and enhanced college subsidies, often sustained by war-driven supplementals, will arguably evaporate as the Obama Administration withdraws forces from Iraq and America grows weary of further off-budget defense expenditures. Combined with the nation’s current economic hardships and growing governmental budget deficits, budgetary allocations to recruiting programs will undoubtedly diminish.

Predictably, the reliance on National Guard as an operational force will not lessen with twenty first century challenges at home and abroad, and neither will the need to attract and retain Guard membership at effective levels. However, with declining recruiting eligibility pools and an increased competition for eligible recruits, the Army National Guard will be hard-pressed to find willing and qualified recruits to meet future operational guard recruitment objectives.

Illustrative of the youth eligibility predicament, Undersecretary of Defense, Dr. David Chu points out, “We should not lose sight of the fact that, although the youth population is large, a relatively small proportion of American youth is qualified to enlist.”³¹ Dr. Chu points out that only about three of every 10 Americans of military age,

generally considered 17 to 24 years old, can meet the standards for military service.³²

Dr. Chu cited statistics reporting that; about 35 percent of these Americans of military age are medically disqualified. Obesity is a large contributing factor; 18 percent are barred due to a record of abusing drugs or alcohol; 5 percent have serious conduct/criminal problems; 6 percent have too many dependents, and 9 percent scored in the lowest aptitude category on the enlistment test. Another 10 percent are qualified but considered unavailable because they are attending college.³³ Accordingly, experts believe that fewer than 5 million potential recruits out of the total of about 31 million Americans of age to serve in the military qualify. From that reduced field, the services need about 300,000 recruits a year for active, reserve and National Guard forces.³⁴

Compounding the Army National Guard's recruiting challenge is the added competition from other government entities such as the Active Army's efforts to increase their ranks by 74,000 soldiers by 2012.³⁵ And, drawing from the same limited demographic pool, the Obama Administration's plans to expand AmeriCorps from 75,000 to 250,000 positions and double the Peace Corp by 16,000. These military, as well as national service opportunities in projects such as healthcare, education, energy, and homeland security greatly benefit youth, citizens and image abroad;³⁶ however, their increased membership likely will reduce future Army Guard accessions.

Managing the Frequency and Duration of Army Guard Activations

DOD Directive 1200.17 outlines the principles and policies that govern the activation of the operational Guard. Arguable, far from meeting its objective, the directive attempts to provide a basis for predictable and seamless integration of Guard forces into full-time service. Furthermore, the use of the operational Guard under

current conditions, fails to meet the DOD objective of using the Guard in a “judicious and prudent” manner. Accelerated deployments, pre and post training obligations and the unpredictability of homeland defense requirements significantly reduce Guard members’ expectation management. Aptly stated by Army Reserve Chief Lieutenant General Jack C. Stultz, “one weekend a month, two weeks a summer no longer meets our nation's needs.”³⁷ Transitioning to the Total Force, the accompanied reduction in Active Army strength and the recent transition of the National Guard to an operational force has permanently altered the legacy of reserve component membership, particularly in the Army National Guard. Adherence to a consistent training and deployment force generation model and a considerable reduction in cross-leveling practices would greatly enhance the Guard's ability to meet this DOD directive.

In actuality, soldiers, family members and employers currently lack deployment predictability under the current attempt to manage units under the Army Force Generation Model (AFORGEN). The AFROGEN model provides a reasonable five year cycle with defined phases allowing for unit training, unit readiness reset and ensures a maximum “rest” period (dwell time) between deployments. The failure to apply it to current conditions impacts the sustainability and stability of future forces. While the Army Chief of Staff states the policy will not be fully implemented by 2011, the Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, Ronald James testified that the Reserve Components were “a long way from the ultimate goal of 1:5”.³⁸

Perhaps the most disabling factor in the implementation the operational Guard is the persistent practice of cross-leveling of personnel into strength deficient units – “borrowing troops from other units to fill the unit being deployed.”³⁹ This all too common

process compromises unit cohesiveness, training effectiveness and the prescribed unit reset and soldier dwell time standards. According to Lieutenant Colonel Tom Phiel, Deputy Chief of the Army Guard's Personnel Programs, Resources and Manpower Division, "Right now, we're averaging between one year mobilized and two to three years at home."⁴⁰ He further states that Guard planners typically look at units instead of individuals when calculating dwell time, "the goal is one year deployed and four years at home".⁴¹ Since September 2001 to April 2004 alone, the Army National Guard initiated over 71,000 transfers of personnel from one unit to another to enhance the readiness of deploying units.⁴² As recently stated by Secretary Gates, "The aim was to minimize the practice of cobbling together personnel from different units to fill out a battalion or brigade... I believe those from a community or a state who train together should deploy and fight together."⁴³

In summary, this operational directive presents expectation management as a crucial objective to operational reserve success; however, in practice the DOD continues to fail to provide predictable and sensible use of the Army Guard as an operational force in the operational environment.

Voluntary duty is Encouraged to Meet Mission Requirements

The application of this DOD Directive 1200.17, arguably, contradicts the previous operational objective. By encouraging voluntary duty, Army Guard members seeking individual deployment opportunities outside of their traditional units, the Guard fails to promote cohesive, well-lead and sufficiently trained operational units. Routinely, in order to meet OIF and OEF deployment requirements, the Army National Guard has promoted intrastate and interstate voluntary cross-leveling opportunities. As an

example, from 2003 to 2006 the Army Guard steadily increased the cross-leveling percentage from approximately 10 to over 30 percent of soldiers required to meet minimum unit deployment criteria.⁴⁴ This practice has left company and brigade elements lacking experienced leaders and trained soldiers.

The persistent cross-leveling of personnel to fill strength deficient units and the failure to adhere to the force generation model are two major contributing factors to the unsustainability of the operational Guard. A third more significant factor, the lack of adequate resourcing, will be closely examined as follows.

The Army Guard is Resourced to Meet Readiness Requirements

Meeting the intent of the seventh operational directive may be the DOD's most significant challenge. Efforts to fully resource, and in many cases restore, the Army Guard to pre-war readiness levels are weakened by an ailing economy, fierce competition by other defense entities and the very real prospect of significant defense budget cuts. More specifically, defense spending improvements are bleak and the prospects of receiving much relied upon defense supplementals are equally uncertain. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recently stated, "The global financial crisis is going to have an effect on us in the military...and the department (DOD) will have to start tightening our belt."⁴⁵ The Obama Administration has in fact asked the Joint Chief of Staff to make a 10 percent spending cut in Fiscal Year 2010 defense spending.⁴⁶ Further evidence of "belt tightening" can be found in the outcome of the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Of the 361 amendments proposed to substantially assist beleaguered reserve members and their families all but three were included in the final bill. Provisions to increase full-time manning, improvements in TRICARE, revisions

in reserve retirement pay, and other reserve related actions were stripped from the NDAA.⁴⁷ These gloomy fiscal projections discourage realistic efforts to man and equip an operational Guard.

Well funded programs providing soldier and family care, initiatives to support Guard employers and substantial upgrades to training facilities are but a few of the requirements necessary to sustain the operational Guard. However, arguably, the two most critical short-term mission essential requirements of the operational Guard are full-time manning and equipping funding. Analyses of these two specific resource deficits warrant a closer and expansive examination.

Concerning the essentiality of full-time manning resources, John O. Marsh, former Secretary of the Army for the Reagan Administration, provided the following testimony to the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve (CNGR), “full time personnel contribute immensely to the readiness and effectiveness of the units in which they serve.”⁴⁸ Full -Time Support personnel enable reservists to focus on training during weekend drills and annual training periods. They perform a wide range of day to day functions such as training, recruiting, retention counseling, equipment maintenance and administrative duties.

Furthermore, the National Guard Association of the United States of America (NGAUS), an organization representing more than 500,000 citizen-soldiers, opines, “The Army National Guard is transitioning to an operational reserve although its full-time support is not resourced at the requirement levels validated for the previous mission of a strategic reserve”.⁴⁹ Further, NGAUS believes, accelerating the growth of fulltime support in the Army National Guard reduces risk to the nation by strengthening the

readiness of the force to conduct overseas missions and places more manpower at hand for domestic contingencies.⁵⁰

Short and long-term forecasts to increase full-time manning remain gloomy as reflected in current full-time manpower projections showing validated requirements of 84,862 personnel (42,533 Active Guard and Reserve, 40,729 Military Technicians and 1,600 Non-Dual Status). Fiscal Year (FY) 08 provides only 68% of the identified requirement. The FY 09 budget increases FY 08 provisions by a mere 1%.⁵¹

The CNGR concludes that Army funding for full-time support has not been sufficient. Further the commission finds that the Army does not have a reliable process for determining full-time support requirements.⁵² As early as 2003, the then published Army posture statement acknowledged Guard leadership's continued request for full time manning.⁵³ The ARNG Director, Lieutenant General Clyde Vaughn, recently acknowledged that the serious shortage of full-time readiness personnel to train and support Guard equates to equipment shortage that negatively impacts troop readiness.⁵⁴ A 2006 Government Accounting Office (GAO) report found that the number of full time personnel supporting the Army reserve components directly affects unit readiness in numerous ways.⁵⁵ Further, the GAO report found the Army Guard (and Army Reserve) full-time support programs are inadequate and this deficiency contributes to low readiness.⁵⁶ Similarly insufficient in funding and equally important in sustaining an operational Guard is the equipping of the operational force.

The funding of Army National Guard equipment shortages meets all aspects of the VUCA environment - volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. The mayhem surrounding equipping the operational Guard not only impedes routine and pre-

deployment training and readiness imperatives , but more importantly, encumbers the Guard's ability to respond to homeland defense requirements. Supporting this assertion, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, Mr. T.F. Hall recently stated, "The current lack of Reserve Component (RC) equipment has raised concerns about the RC's ability to respond to natural disasters or homeland defense emergencies."⁵⁷ Moreover, Governors continue to express their concern for the lack of serviceability of National Guard equipment remaining within their respective borders. California Governor Schwarzenegger stated, "Every time our National Guard leaves, they take with them equipment but they don't bring it back... there's only so long they can do that...I think it is not fair to the state for the federal government to go into a war situation and then to take from us the equipment."⁵⁸ Meanwhile, national leaders continue to vacillate from optimism to frustration in regards to equipment replenishment. For example, in 2006 the Chief of the National Guard Bureau (CNGB) optimistically predicted that relief is on the way from a supportive Pentagon and Congress that would provide \$29 billion to reequip worn-out or replace missing equipment.⁵⁹ However, in 2007, the CNGB told a congressional committee that Army National Guard units have on average just 40 percent of their required equipment on hand and that bolstering supplies to a proper level would require an extra \$40 billion.⁶⁰

Currently, the National Guard Bureau reports overall equipment levels are 40 to 60 percent below authorized resourcing marks due to long-standing shortages in federal provisions and money.⁶¹ The 2007 Annual National Guard of the United States (NGAUS) almanac underscored shortages of radios, trucks, helicopters and other materiel, specifically.⁶² Other shortages include night- vision devices and weapons

according to Lieutenant General Clyde Vaughn, “equipment shortfalls are a product of many decades of under-resourcing the Guard and thinking that it was a strategic reserve, not an operational force,”⁶³ Though 2008 equipment levels improved slightly, a report provided by the CNGR which found that only 56 percent of dual use items such as trucks, radios, generators and medical kits essential for domestic and battlefield purposes were currently available.⁶⁴ Speaking at the October 2008 Association of the United States Army Land Warfare Forum, the commander of Forces Command, General Charles Campbell, told reporters, “clearly what is required is adequate equipment that enables home-station training at reserve centers and armories prior to mobilization”⁶⁵

In summary, whether it’s full-time manning or equipment shortages specifically or the Guard budget shortfalls in general, the current and predicted operational force utilization far exceeds the nation’s ability to properly resource the Army Guard component. Manning, training and equipping the Army National Guard, in particular, is no longer an economical value once provided the American taxpayer under the strategic reserve concept. The persistent failure to fund these programs prevents the sustainment of an operational Army Guard. As author Mike Doubler states, “You can have all the policies you want that say it’s going to generate readiness, but if you do not give the commensurate resources to go with that, you will have nothing.”⁶⁶ Specifically, the DOD directive states, “reserve components are resourced to meet readiness requirements.”⁶⁷ Essential to that effort and fundamental to strategic to operational transformation sustainment is the ability to shape the future force to meet current mission requirements and provide funding flexibility for unforeseen contingencies.

Outreach Services are Established and Available for the Army Guard

The eighth operational objective of DOD Directive 1200.17 acknowledges the importance of providing outreach services to reserve component members, their families and employers from “pre-activation through reintegration.” Unfortunately this DOD directive falls well short of its stated purpose by failing, eight years after operational force implementation, to provide “reachable” and sustainable services for Guard members and their families. Additionally, little has been done to provide tangible assistance to a vital supporter of the citizen-soldier – the employer. A closer examination of outreach progress reveals the difficulties and challenges facing the implementation of this DOD directive. The success of an operational Guard may very well depend on the DOD’s ability to provide substantial and expeditious improvements in soldier, family and employer support systems.

Resources to support Army Guard families since 2001 continue to develop slowly; however, in comparison to active component family members, use of specific military benefits are often restricted, limited or unavailable. While Guard members and their families share with their active duty counterparts the common experience of prolonged and unpredictable mobilizations and deployments, two distinct differences emerge; proximity to military support systems and the association with the civilian employer’s of Guard members.

Unlike the majority of active duty dependents, Guard families are dispersed throughout the rural and urban communities of America. Often, they are unable to avail themselves of the comprehensive services of military bases. Medical care, housing, commissary, PX and other conveniences, easily accessed by Active Army families, are often difficult to access for Guard families living outside of reasonable travel distances.

Specifically, the lack of access to healthcare services poses the greatest concern for Guard members and their families.

The Commission on National Guard and Reserves (CNGR) looked at health care from both the family and employer perspective. The commission found, Guard families, whose service members are activated for the first time, find TRICARE to be difficult to navigate and non-user friendly.”⁶⁸ And since Guard families are dispersed in over 3000 communities, all too often, local health care providers elect not to participate in TRICARE. As a result of this finding, the CNGR recommends that Congress allow Guard members’ access to the existing Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, an alternative to TRICARE.⁶⁹ A final recommendation by the CNGR advocates a stipend or tax credit be offered to employers or families so they may continue to provide employer paid health-care coverage.⁷⁰ This initiative benefits both the Guard family and further develops a positive connection between the National Guard and the employer.

The employer plays a fundamental part in maintaining an operational Guard and maintaining the spirit of citizen soldiering. Guard history reflects that the pre-operational use of the National Guard in America’s past military and civil support operations was an acceptable sacrifice to the employer. However, under an operational concept, the use of the Guard strains the supportive compact enjoyed by employers and their soldier employees. A growing number of Guard members are experiencing an increase in employee/employer conflict with longer employee absences with a higher degree of frequency, unpredictability, and legitimacy.⁷¹ Under current conditions, Guard members are expected to provide significant amounts of unpaid time to fulfill their military duties often in excess of 40 hours per week, and especially when preparing for mobilization.⁷²

Excessive military duty requirements combined with civilian employment obligations overtax all associations and may very well jeopardize previously positive service member/employer relationships. Specifically, the increased use of the Guard limits Guard member's access to civilian professional development, middle and high level management advancement and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Operational requirements without accompanying outreach services to Guard soldiers, families and employers impair efforts to sustain an operational Guard and further damage the Guard's institutional character and its ability to protect the health and safety of the total Guard team.

In testimony before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity of the House Committee on Veteran's Affairs, the Director of the Arkansas University Small Business Development Center stated,

The continued deployment of National Guard and Reserve military personnel in the Global War on Terror who are also business owners is creating additional hardships on those reserve component service members than their non-business owner/self employed counterparts. Continued deployments of this sub group of Guardsmen and Reservists has resulted in numerous business failures, losses of business income, bankruptcies and economic losses to their enterprises that have created undue hardships on their civilian careers. The playing field between reserve component business owners and non military business owners is no longer even and their service to their country is resulting in significant losses in their civilian careers.⁷³

The CNGR recognizes the higher operational tempo has caused a strain in relations between employers and the military and recommended a compact be established between the two entities.⁷⁴ U.S. Small Business Administration programs aimed specifically at veterans and reserve component business owners has improved but is still insufficient in meeting their needs.⁷⁵

In summary, outreach programs are insufficient to support continual transformation efforts, and therefore fail to adequately provide soldiers and families a continuum of services essential to a high tempo operationalized force. From pre-mobilization through reintegration, Guard members and their families must drive further, pay more and expect less for benefits offered to their active duty counterparts. Outreach programs are requisite in sustaining an operational Guard. The lack of these programs combined with unremitting deployment requirements may account for the precarious spike in suicides, divorces, substance abuse incidents and other adverse factors that threaten the sustainable and well-being of the Army Guard organization. A dysfunctional Army Guard cannot adequately support its wide array of mission responsibilities to include perhaps its most primary mission – defense of the homeland.

Homeland Defense and Defense Support to Civil Authorities are Total Force Missions

Inherent to every U.S. military member is the responsibility to protect the American people against threats at home or abroad. The oath taken by all who serve in uniform acknowledge subservience to civilian authority, a fundamental precept in the Constitution. As a total force imperative, the defense of the homeland is the American military's most critical mission. A large-scale catastrophic event or a series of simultaneous smaller events, on American soil, may require the full employment of all available military resources. DOD Directive 1200.17 directs all military forces, state and federal, to establish a unity of effort in mitigating threats to the homeland. When confronting natural or manmade, active and Guard forces are duty bound to work together for a common response to a common mission – protecting the lives and property of the American citizen. This DOD directive recognizes the lawful distinction

between command of forces by acknowledging that federal forces are under federal command and control and non-federalized National Guard forces under state command and control. The Founding Fathers clearly avowed that the indisputable provider and lead agent of military forces in defense of the homeland, on the homeland, is the state militia...the National Guard.

In accordance with this concept, managing crisis and restoring order within the nation's community should be accomplished at the lowest jurisdictional level possible.⁷⁶ With its unique presence in our communities and as our nation's first military responder, the American citizen expects the National Guard to provide a timely and reliable response to domestic emergencies. Implicit to that understanding is that the citizen-soldier will be present to provide that response. The increased federalization of the Army Guard, especially as a major expeditionary force provider, fails to adequately support the Governors' use of the Guard in current homeland security strategies.

Finally, General George Washington proposed the establishment of a formal militia to maintain peace and protect us from foreign invaders. In this analysis, it could be argued that foreign invaders are those external forces, manmade or natural, bringing great harm upon the America public. These threats jeopardize lives and property, threaten the economic vitality of the nation and significantly alter the American "way of life." The U.S. Commission on National Security for the 21st Century recommended, "The Secretary of Defense, at the President's direction, should make homeland security a primary mission of the National Guard, it should be organized, properly trained and adequately equipped to undertake the mission."⁷⁷ On 24 November 2008, Secretary Robert Gates issued a memo to his top department leaders to conduct a broad review

to determine if the National Guard and Reserve can adequately deal with domestic disasters and whether they have the training and equipment to defend the homeland.⁷⁸ The CNGR determined that the current use of the National Guard jeopardizes its doctrinal role as a military reserve, and further, the overuse of the Guard as an expeditionary force has seriously impacted its ability to provide properly trained and equipped personnel in defense of the homeland.⁷⁹ Implicit to this requirement is a concerted effort to keep the Guard at home.

Conclusion

The operational Guard, as part of the Total Army, provides capabilities across the full spectrum of conflict. In doing so, the operational Guard provides the nation an enhanced expeditionary warfighting capacity while maintaining a responsibility to provide homeland defense, security and support to civilian authorities. By ascribing to DOD Directive 1200.17, defense leaders are provided an overarching set of policies that promote and support the management of the Guard as an operational force. Fully implemented, these policies shape an operational force fully capable of providing fully manned, trained and equipped units to a forward conflict or homeland disaster.

However, several years past the implementation of the operational Guard, the force remains chronically under resourced. Fully implementing this operational objective will require substantial budgetary outlays. The means to sustain an operational force must go beyond its reliance on defense supplementals. Furthermore, the National Guard, specifically the Army Guard, can no longer afford to meet readiness objectives by cross-leveling personnel and equipment to meet “eleventh hour” DOD deployment requirements.

The implementation of an operational Guard is feasible with a tremendous expenditure of resources provided across a wide category of support systems prudently managed and properly resourced. The Army Guard is fully capable of performing as an effective combat expeditionary force and a responsive homeland support asset. However, the acceptability of using the Guard as a forward and prolonged expeditionary force is debatable. A military in reserve has a doctrinally prescribed use in military operations. The transformation of the Guard to operational force has reduced its strategic significance. Moreover, the perception of the demise of the citizen-soldier, arguably, is unacceptable to the American public which relies on the National Guard to maintain relevance and connectivity to the local community. Finally, the operational Guard is unsustainable due to tight fiscal limitations which severely restrict maintaining critical readiness levels. Chairman of the CNGR opines, "this is worse than the worst readiness days of the hollow force in the late '70s and the early '80s."⁸⁰ Continuing on this path, the erosion of the operational Guard will render it unsuitable to perform even the most fundamental missions. Compounding that dilemma will be fiscal uncertainties.

The Army Guard has traditionally offered the taxpayer a superb economic advantage; quite simply...a part-time force costs less. In fact, while the Army National Guard is over 30 percent of the Total Army force, it is a mere 12 percent of the total Army budget.⁸¹ However, sustaining an operational force that has increased its workload seven fold⁸² over the past seven years will be a significant challenge for budget planners and a heavy liability for the American taxpayer.

And finally, perhaps the biggest burden the American citizen may bear is reliance on a depleted Army National Guard incapable of providing its core mission – protecting

the homeland. Unless significant systemic flaws in the implementation of the operational Guard are addressed, or policy makers reconstitute the strategic reserve, the America people will risk the loss of an effective National Guard force...and when you risk the Guard you risk America.

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